

Article 11 | Sign Standards

Sec. 11.1 General

11.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is:

- A. To encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication;
- B. To maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment, and the community's ability to attract sources of economic development and growth;
- C. To eliminate physical and visual clutter;
- D. To improve pedestrian and traffic safety; to minimize the possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property; and
- E. To enable the fair and consistent enforcement of these sign regulations.

11.1.2 Effect

The effect of this section is:

- A. To establish a permit system that allows a variety of types of signs on business premises and a limited variety of signs on other premises, subject to this Ordinance and its permit procedures;
- B. To allow certain small, unobtrusive signs incidental to the principal use of a site without a permit if such signs meet the substantive requirements of this Ordinance;
- C. To prohibit off-premise advertising signs, except where regulation is controlled by state or federal law;
- D. To allow a variety of types of noncommercial signs subject to the same substantive and permit requirements that control on-premise signs;
- E. To allow certain types of signs to make minor encroachments of the public right-of-way, if specially permitted; and
- F. To prohibit all signs not expressly permitted by this Ordinance.

Sec. 11.2 General Requirements for Signs

11.2.1 Sign Defined Interpretations

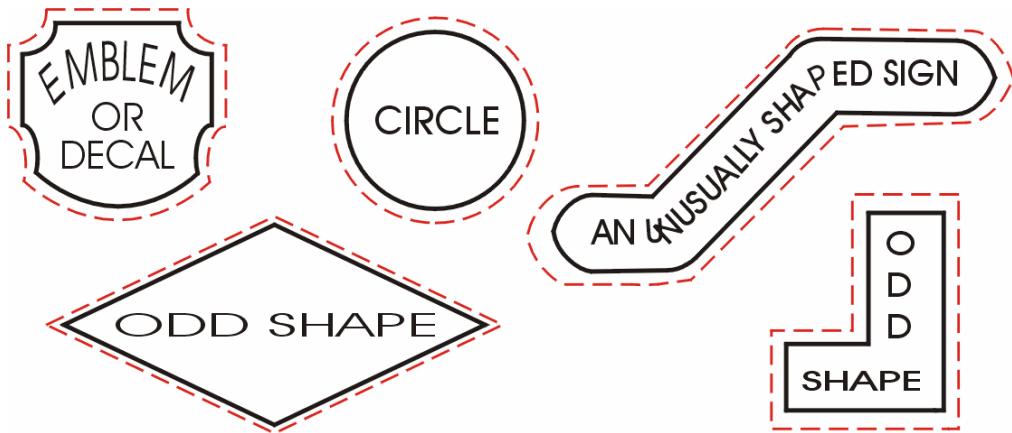
- A. A sign shall be considered any words, lettering, parts of letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, devices, structures, designs, trade names, or trade marks by which anything is made known such as are used to designate an individual, a firm, an association, a corporation, a profession, a business, or a commodity or products, which are legible from any public street or adjacent property and used to attract attention.
- B. This definition includes the structure or the face on which a sign message is displayed.
- C. For the purposes of this section, this definition shall not include "trade dress," i.e.; architectural features identified with a product or business, as a sign.
- D. Various kinds of signs are further defined in this section.

11.2.2 Sign Calculation Standards

A. Sign Area

- 1. The area of a sign shall include all lettering, wording, designs and symbols, together with the background, whether open or enclosed, on which they are displayed. The supporting structure or bracing of a sign shall be omitted in measuring the area of the sign unless such structure or bracing is made part of the message or face of the sign. Any backlit area shall be considered part of the face of the sign.

Commentary: The “golden arches” at McDonald’s, if used as support for a sign, are clearly integral to the sign message and would be included in the computation of the area of the sign face.



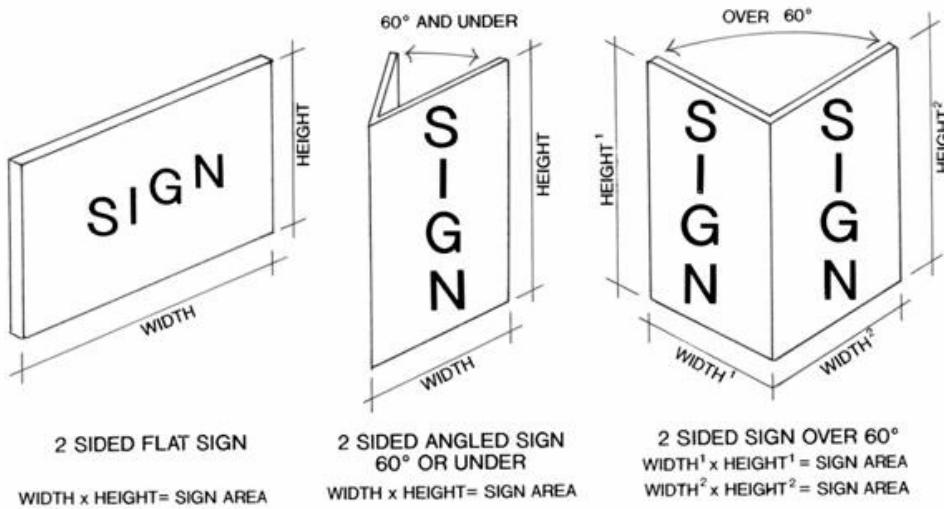
- 2. Where a sign consists of individual letters, words or symbols attached to a surface, building, canopy, awning, wall or window and all such elements are located in the same plane, the sign area shall be the area of the smallest rectangle which completely encompasses all such letters, words or symbols and any accompanying background of a

color different than the natural color of the wall. Where such sign includes multiple words, each word located in the same plane shall be computed separately.



Commentary: Channel letter signs, mounted logos, and similar devices are treated differently than signs in cabinets – the wall area between multiple elements does not count as sign area.

3. The area for a sign with more than one face shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces. On all signs other than wall signs, which shall only be allowed one face, signs with identical sign faces placed in such a manner to ensure that the angle at which the two sign faces are placed does not exceed 60 degrees, shall be considered as a single face.



Commentary: It is presumed that where sign faces are placed less than 60 degrees apart, both faces are not readable from any one point.

4. The entire surface area of a multi-tenant sign that depicts the names of the individual tenants shall count toward the total aggregate area of the sign.
5. All monument signs shall incorporate a street address number or address range. Street address numbers shall be a minimum of six inches high in residential districts, and 12 inches high in all other districts. The area of the address number shall not be computed as part of the sign face unless it exceeds twice the minimum number height

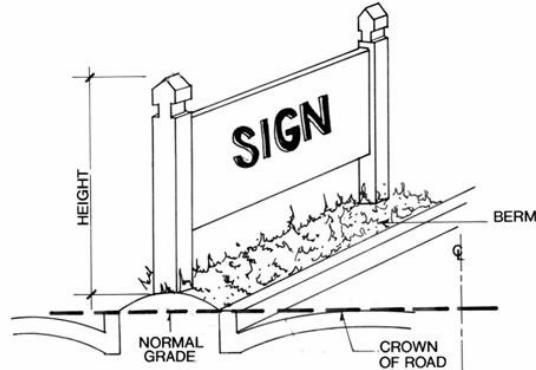
requirement. All such street address numbers shall be displayed in accordance with City or County standards, as applicable.

B. Aggregate Sign Area

1. The maximum allowable aggregate sign area of all signs in a project that may be allocated among all sign types allowed or permitted on the site shall be as follows:
 - a. Buildings within the DD District and Compact Neighborhood Tiers shall be permitted a sign area equal to 25% of the wall area below 26 feet in height plus 10% of the wall area above 26 feet in height, except where this Ordinance allows signs in the DD District with no maximum size.
 - b. Buildings within nonresidential zoning districts except those listed in paragraphs c. or d. below shall be permitted two square feet of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage.
 - c. Buildings in the OI District and the –TO Overlay shall be permitted one square foot of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage.
 - d. Buildings in the SRP, IL, and I districts shall be permitted two and one quarter square feet of sign area for each linear foot of lot frontage.
 - e. In order to accommodate projects with very small frontages at least 32 square feet of sign area shall be permitted as a minimum in all nonresidential districts.
2. Application of the aggregate sign area allowable shall not permit the area of any single sign or sign type to exceed the standard established elsewhere in this Article.

C. Sign Height

The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at a computed grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign (including the sign face, sign structure, or any other appurtenance). The computed grade shall be the elevation of the nearest point to the proposed sign location of the crown of the nearest public street providing access; or the grade of the land at the principal entrance to the principal structure on the lot, whichever is higher.



11.2.3 Substitution of Noncommercial Message

Noncommercial signs shall be allowed in all districts and may be substituted for any sign expressly allowed under this Ordinance. Noncommercial signs shall be subject to the same permit requirements, restrictions on size and type, and other conditions and specifications as apply to the sign for which they are being substituted.

11.2.4 Illumination

- A. Signs may be illuminated from within or from an external source, but such illumination shall be in a manner which avoids glare or reflection which in any way interferes with traffic safety.
- B. Internally illuminated signs shall be required to have an opaque background and translucent copy.
- C. Sign lighting shall not be detrimental to adjacent residential property. Property directly across a public right of way, other than a controlled access highway, shall be considered to be adjacent property.
- D. Unless otherwise permitted within this Ordinance, signs shall not be illuminated by moving lights, flickering lights, or a string of lights placed around the sign.

11.2.5 Design, Construction and Maintenance

- A. All signs shall comply with applicable provisions of the North Carolina Building Code and the National Electrical Code.
- B. Signs shall be constructed of permanent materials and permanently affixed to the ground or building except for those signs that, by their nature, are considered temporary.
- C. Permanent signs shall be maintained in good condition at all times and shall be kept free of cracked or peeling paint, missing or damaged sign panels or supports, and weeds, grass or vegetation that obscures the view of the sign message.

11.2.6 Placement of Signs

- A. Signs shall be located so as not to block windows, doors, or other means of ingress and egress.
- B. Unless otherwise allowed in this Ordinance, no commercial messages shall be allowed on construction fencing.

11.2.7 Changeable Copy on On-Premise Signs

Except as authorized under paragraph 11.3.1B, Exception for Downtown Tier, changeable copy shall be allowed only on on-premise signs that are: in nonresidential districts, associated with nonresidential uses in the PDR District, or associated with places of worship and institutional uses in any district, subject to the following:

- A. No more than 50% of the area of a sign shall be devoted to changeable copy, except for signs for theaters which can devote up to 80% of a sign to changeable copy.
- B. The display of copy shall not change more than eight times in one day, except for time and temperature displays.
- C. Displayed copy shall not be animated, blinking, chasing, flashing, or have other moving effects. This provision shall not restrict the copy from changing from one message to another.

11.2.8 Nonconforming Signs

- A. Signs that were lawful as of the effective date of this Ordinance but are not in conformance with current requirements shall be permitted to be maintained as nonconforming signs.

B. **Nonconforming Off-Premise Signs**

Certain off-premise signs, as defined in Sec. 11.3, Prohibited Signs, that were made nonconforming by previous ordinances but were allowed to continue beyond the amortization period in force for other off-premise signs may continue to exist until such point that compensation is not required for their removal under federal law, subject to the following restrictions, which are carried forward from previous ordinances, or are clarifications of such ordinances:

1. The signs and supporting structures may not be enlarged, moved to a different location in the City or County except by moving 1/100th of a mile on the same sign location or site as authorized by 19A NCAC 2E.0210(16), or improved through replacement by substantially different materials or in any other manner;
2. Lights and/or other electric or electronic features may not be added, and the intensity of lighting may not be increased;
3. The signs must operate in compliance with all other restrictions in Article 11, and the UDO, and other local regulations, including but not limited to prohibitions on sign operation and sign features contained in paragraph 11.3.1 and 11.3.2 and prohibitions on dilapidated and damaged signs contained in 11.3.6 and 11.3.7.
4. The signs shall be removed if repair or damage to the sign and structure exceeds 50% of value as determined by the criteria in 19A NCAC 2E.0225(f);
5. The signs shall operate in compliance with all restrictions contained in federal and/or State law and regulation; and
6. The owner of such signs shall maintain all necessary records and documents, including permits, required to be obtained under previous ordinances and/or State law or regulation, to demonstrate that the sign may continue to exist under the provisions of paragraph 11.3.5.

The restrictions contained in this section, 11.2.8.B shall not be interpreted to prohibit the City or County from requiring removal of any nonconforming off-premise sign when removal is accomplished in accordance with applicable law, including but not limited to federal and/or state requirements regarding compensation.

Sec. 11.3 Prohibited Signs

The following signs shall be prohibited, and may neither be erected nor maintained:

11.3.1 Animated or Motion Signs

Signs with animated, blinking, chasing, flashing, or moving effects; however, this provision shall not prohibit signs with an alternating display of time or temperature and signs with changeable copy pursuant to paragraph 11.2.7, Changeable Copy on On-Premise Signs.

A. General Prohibition

In all tiers other than the Downtown Tier, signs with animated, blinking, chasing, flashing, or moving effects (including but not limited to sign faces that periodically change to show different images or messages) are prohibited, with the exception of signs that alternate the display of time or temperature and signs with changeable copy under Sec. 11.2.7, Changeable Copy on On-Premise Signs.

B. Exception for Downtown Tier

In the Downtown Tier, signs with animated, blinking, chasing, flashing, or moving effects, including sign faces that periodically change to show different images or messages shall be allowed through the issuance of a minor special use permit pursuant to Sec. 3.9, Special Use Permit. In addition to the review factors in paragraph 3.9.8B, Review Factors, the following review factors shall also be considered:

1. The sign or signs are spaced so as to not lead to excessive animated signage in an area;
2. There is no negative impact upon traffic safety; and
3. There is artistic or historic merit or other design qualities that will have a positive impact on the downtown.

11.3.2 Rotating Signs

Rotating or revolving signs.

11.3.3 Windblown or Inflated Signs

Fluttering, spinning, windblown or inflated devices including pennants, propeller discs, flags or banners which do not conform with the requirements of this Ordinance unless associated with a temporary use in the Downtown Tier authorized under Sec. 3.12, Temporary Use Permit, and Sec. 5.5, Temporary Uses.

11.3.4 Portable Signs

Any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, including but not limited to signs:

- A. With attached wheels;
- B. Converted to A- or T-frame signs;
- C. Menu and sandwich board signs. This provision shall not apply to approved moveable sidewalk signs as set forth in paragraph 11.5.2, Moveable Signs on Sidewalk;
- D. Gas or hot air filled displays; and

- E. Attached or painted on vehicles parked and visible from the right-of-way, unless said vehicle is used as a vehicle in the normal day-to-day operations of the business.

11.3.5 Off-Premise Signs

- A. A sign that directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment not conducted, sold, or offered on the premises where the sign is located, or which business, commodity, service, or entertainment forms only minor or incidental activity upon the premises where the sign is displayed. The sale of a commodity shall be considered a minor activity if the commodity advertised is a specific brand or if the advertising content is not directly controlled, or has in the past not been directly controlled by the operator of the on-premise business. These product-oriented signs shall be considered on-premises signs if they comply with on-premise sign requirements.
- B. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph 11.3.5A, above, the provisions of paragraph 11.2.8, Nonconforming Signs, shall apply to nonconforming off-premise signs located along federal and primary or interstate highways that were existing as of September 4, 1990, in the City or December 1, 1989, in the County and meet all requirements of paragraph 11.2.8.
- C. The prohibition of off-premise signs shall not apply to signs allowed pursuant to paragraph 11.6.2A.8, Way-Finding Signs, and paragraph 11.6.2A.9, Non-Residential Entry Signs.

11.3.6 Obsolete Signs

- A. A sign relating to or identifying a business or activity that has not been conducted on the premises for six months or to a transpired election or event, or to a political party or non-profit organization that no longer exists.
- B. The structure for a sign that is not allowed under this Ordinance if such structure cannot be used for a legal use or does not comply with the height, size, or other physical requirements of the Ordinance.

11.3.7 Dilapidated or Damaged Signs

A sign that has missing or broken panels, broken or damaged supports or frame, or otherwise displays inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence or abandonment.

11.3.8 Signs Constituting Traffic Hazards

Any sign which constitutes a hazard to traffic including, but not limited to, signs located within the sight distance triangle of an intersection.

11.3.9 Signs Located in the Public Right-of-Way

Except as allowed in Sec. 11.4, Signs Allowed in All Districts without a Permit, and those signs expressly allowed in rights-of-way in Sec. 11.5, Signs Allowed in Right-of-Way, all signs, including supports, frames, and embellishments, that are located within a public right of way or attached, affixed, or painted on any utility pole, light standard, utility box or pedestal, tree, rock, or other natural object located within the public right of way or on public property, except as expressly permitted by the City Public Works Director, or designee; County General Services Director, or designee; or NCDOT, as applicable.

11.3.10 All Other Unlisted Signs

All other signs that are not expressly exempt from regulation or expressly permitted under this Article.

Sec. 11.4 Signs Allowed in All Districts without a Permit

11.4.1 General

- A. The signs under this section shall be allowed in all zoning districts.
- B. No sign permit shall be required; however, the property owner's consent shall be obtained before erecting such signage.
- C. Other than vending machines, automatic tellers, and gasoline pumps, no signs allowed under this section shall be illuminated.
- D. All signs shall be located outside the public right-of-way and outside of any required sight distance triangle except signs pursuant to paragraph 11.4.2D, Directional Signs for Sale, Lease, or Rental of Residential Property.

11.4.2 Table of SignTypes Allowed Without a Sign Permit

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT	
<p>A. Banner Signs</p> <p>A lightweight fabric or similar material which is permanently mounted to a pole either enclosed in a frame or mounted to restrict movement caused by the atmosphere.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each banner shall be at least six square feet in area but no more than 36 square feet in area, and all banners on the same lot shall be consistent in terms of colors and materials used. 2. Each banner shall be individually attached to a pole, mast arm or other structure. 3. An overall signage plan shall be approved when multiple banners are placed on a lot. 4. All banners shall be maintained in good condition. 5. Banners shall display information that is solely decorative or noncommercial, and can include information that identifies historic districts or historic landmarks, and shall not be included in the computation of total sign area on a property. See Sec. 7.7, Flagpoles and Flags, for regulation of flags and flagpoles. 6. Banners which display a logo, message, statement, or expression relating to commercial interests are considered signs which require a sign permit by this Ordinance and shall conform to the requirements for suspended signs, projecting signs or freestanding signs, depending on the method of installation and support. 	

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT		
B. Construction Signs		
<p>A sign that identifies architects, engineers, contractors and other individuals or firms involved with construction on the premises, the name of the building or development, the intended purpose of the building, and/or the expected completion date.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In single-family residential districts on projects not involving multiple lots, such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and four feet in height and are limited to one per lot. In all other circumstances, such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and eight feet in height, except in the DD District where such signs shall not exceed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10% of the building facade area along the street frontage location or 120 square feet in area, whichever is less; and Eight feet in height. The sign shall be removed prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance. Construction signs in accordance with this section are permitted at a maximum rate of one sign per 50 continuous linear feet of construction fence. Where there is no construction fencing, the number of signs allowed shall be one per street frontage. 		
C. Customary Identification Signs	<p>Signs such as building numbers, addresses, private parking signs, no trespassing signs or dangerous animal signs.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Such signs shall not exceed three square feet in area per sign.</p>	
D. Directional Signs For Sale or Rent of Residential Property	<p>Signs that provide directional information regarding the sale or lease of residential property.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The signs contain only directional information [i.e., directional arrows, "left 100 yards", "2nd right", etc.] and "house for rent", "open house", "new house(s) for sale" or the name of the project. Other information such as the name of a builder or real estate company is prohibited. The signs shall be temporary signs on white background, unlit, and limited to 2 square feet per side for a single user. The sign message may be placed on each side of the sign. The signs shall not exceed 4 feet in height and shall not obstruct vision clearances. In order to avoid the placement of a series of signs along several miles of roadway, no more than 5 signs shall be allowed per project, or per property when a single dwelling is for sale or rent. Signs shall be placed no farther than one mile from the project or property for which directions are given. Each user is allowed only 1 sign per intersection. Signs for properties for sale or lease shall be removed when a contract is closed on the last property for sale or lease in the project. To encourage assistance in compliance with these requirements, the Planning Director, or designee, may notify the Board of Realtors or the Home Builders Association regarding violations of these provisions. 	

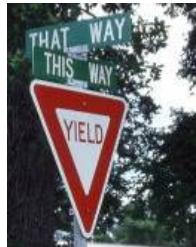
Sec. 11.4 Signs Allowed in All Districts without a Permit

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT	
E. Farm Signs	<p>Signs advertising agricultural products grown or produced on the premises of a farm at least five acres in size.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area per side and eight feet in height. 2. The number of signs shall not exceed a ratio of one sign per 1000 feet of road frontage of farm property. If more than one sign is allowed, the signs shall be at least 500 feet apart. If the farm property fronts on more than one road, each frontage shall be considered separately. 3. The signs shall be set back at least 10 feet from the right-of-way and at least 50 feet from the intersections so that they do not interfere with vision clearances on roads. 4. The signs shall be removed during seasons when sales have ceased. 5. Agricultural properties that wish to apply for permanent signs may do so by permit under the provisions of Sec. 3.10, Sign Permit, but in that event, additional unpermitted signs shall not be allowed.
F. Historic Markers	<p>A sign indicating the date of construction, the name of the building, the principals involved in its construction, or other historical facts. Historic or memorial markers can be erected by a governmental agency or private, nonprofit historic preservation or education organization, pursuant to a plan or program for the erection of such signs or markers applied on a national, State, or county-wide basis, or to properties within a duly authorized local historic district.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan or program sponsoring the sign shall employ uniform standards of eligibility and the sign or marker shall commemorate a person, building, place or event of historical, civic, cultural, natural historical, scientific, or architectural significance. 2. Each such sign or marker shall be made of cast metal, cut masonry, painted wood, glass, other metal or other similar durable weatherproof material. 3. Building-mounted signs shall not exceed six square feet in area. 4. Freestanding signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area.
G. Home Occupation Signs	<p>A sign advertising a home occupation.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Only one wall sign not exceeding three square feet in area shall be allowed.</p>
H. Incidental Signs	<p>An on-premise sign giving information or direction for the convenience and necessity of the public such as "entrance," "exit," "no admittance," "telephone," "parking," etc.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Such signs shall not exceed three square feet of area per sign or four feet in height and shall not contain any logos.</p>

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT		
I. Murals	An image, such as a painting or enlarged photograph, applied directly to a wall or ceiling.	
Standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Murals containing graphics, other than logos or registered trademarks, related to goods and services provided on site are allowed without a permit. Commercial text, logos, or trademarks contained within the mural shall comply with the standards for wall signs within paragraph 11.6.1, Table of Signs Requiring Permits. Mural graphics shall not be included in the sign area calculations when commercial text is included despite paragraph 11.2.2A.2. 	
J. Public Art Placards	Messages on public art that recognize the artist and/or sponsor and are clearly subordinate to the art.	
Standards	Such signs shall not exceed four square feet in area, or five percent of the total square footage of the art, whichever is smaller. For three-dimensional art, the total square footage of the base shall be used to calculate percentage.	
K. Public or Non-Profit Announcements	<p>Announcements by public or non-profit organizations of fund raising events, special events or activities of interest to the general public, other than political signs. Events or activities that are typically routine, such as but not limited to hours of operation, weekly worship times, and other similarly repeated activities shall not be construed to meet this standard.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area for nonresidential districts and shall be limited to one per event. Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area for residential uses in residential districts and 25 square feet in area for nonresidential uses in residential districts and shall be limited to one per event, per premise. Within Design Districts, such signs shall not exceed 10 percent of the individual building facade area or 32 square feet, whichever is greater. Signs shall indicate the date(s) of the activity or event. The sign may be erected up to two weeks prior to the event and shall be removed within seven days after the event. However, in no case shall a sign be posted for more than 30 days. 	

Sec. 11.4 Signs Allowed in All Districts without a Permit

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT	
L. Public Signs	
<p>Signs erected by the federal, state, or local government, or governmental entity.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>The sign shall contain no commercial logo or message.</p>	
M. Real Estate Signs on Nonresidential Property, Multifamily Property, or Subdivision	
<p>A sign located on nonresidential property, multifamily residential property, or in one subdivision if applicable to multiple lots and advertising the property for sale, rent, or lease.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Freestanding signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per sign and eight feet in height and shall be limited to one freestanding sign per street frontage. One wall sign per building facade shall be allowed if the entire building is for sale, rent, or lease. Facades with a frontage measuring less than 100 linear feet shall be allowed a wall sign which shall not exceed 16 square feet in area. Facades with a frontage measuring 100 linear feet or more shall be allowed a wall sign which shall not exceed 32 square feet in area. If portions of a building are for sale, rent, or lease, a single wall sign not to exceed eight square feet shall be allowed for each leasable/rentable/saleable unit. The signs shall be removed within 15 days after closing or execution of a rental or lease agreement. 	
N. Real Estate Signs on Residential Property (Other than Multifamily Property or Subdivision)	
<p>A sign advertising residential property (except for multi-family dwellings or multiple lots in one subdivision) for sale, rent or lease.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and four feet in height for freestanding signs and shall be limited to one sign per street frontage and one wall sign per dwelling unit. The signs shall be removed within 15 days after closing or execution of a rental or lease agreement. 	

SIGNS ALLOWED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A SIGN PERMIT	
O. Traffic Control Signs On Private Property	
<p>Any public notice or warning required by applicable federal, State or local law, regulation or ordinance. Any federal, State or local traffic control or other public sign when located on private property.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The face shall meet FHWA <i>Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices</i> standards. 2. The sign shall contain no commercial logo or message. 	
<p>P. Vending Machines, Automatic Tellers, Gasoline Pumps</p> <p>Signs that display the name, trademark or logo of the company or brand or prices provided the display is an integral part of vending machine, automatic teller machine or gas pump.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>The sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area per side.</p>	
<p>Q. Window Signs</p> <p>Signs that are attached to, painted on, or etched into a window or displayed within 12 inches (measured horizontally) of the window and are legible from outside of the window.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Such signs in combination with other window signs shall not exceed 10% of the window area on each facade. 2. Such signs in combination with all other signs on the lot shall not exceed the maximum permitted sign area for the lot. 	
<p>R. Yard Sale Signs</p> <p>A sign advertising a yard or garage sale.</p> <p>Standards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yard sale signs shall not exceed four feet in height and six square feet in area per sign. 2. Limited to one sign per lot. 3. Such signs may be erected up to five days prior to the event and shall be removed within two days after the event. 	

Sec. 11.5 Signs Allowed in Right-of-Way

11.5.1 General

The following signs are allowed within the public right-of-way in all zoning districts. Where such signs are permanent signs, they shall require a license agreement approved by the Public Works Director, or designee (in the City) or an encroachment agreement approved by NCDOT (in the County) except as specified in Sec. 11.6, Signs Requiring Permits. Signs allowed in right-of-way shall meet all other applicable requirements of this Article.

- A. Awning and projecting signs projecting over a public right-of-way.
- B. Emergency warning signs erected by a government agency, utility company, or a contractor doing work in a public right-of-way.
- C. Public signs erected by or on behalf of the City, County, State or federal government.
- D. Signs erected pursuant to a temporary use permit issued by the Planning Director or designee, subject to such ordinances or regulations as may apply.
- E. Signs identifying a recognized community, subdivision or development provided that such signs are consistent with an approved overall sign plan, site plan or subdivision plat.
- F. (City only) Signs erected in connections with elections, referenda, or current political events provided that they do not exceed six square feet per sign in area and are no more than four feet in height. The signs shall be located so as not to obstruct drivers' vision clearances at intersections. Such signs may be posted 45 days prior to an election in which a person identified on the sign is a candidate or item identified on the sign is on the ballot and shall be removed within 15 days after the election or cessation of candidacy of all persons identified on the sign, whichever comes first. Along State rights-of-way such signs may require permits from NCDOT.

11.5.2 Moveable Signs on Sidewalk

- A. Moveable signs located on sidewalks within the street right-of-way in pedestrian-oriented commercial areas within the CN, CG, and MU Districts and the Downtown Tier shall be allowed, but not require a permit, provided that all the following requirements are met.
 - 1. The sidewalk in the area near the moveable sign shall be wide enough to allow for at least five feet of width for unrestricted pedestrian movement with the sidewalk signs in place.
 - 2. Each sidewalk sign allowed under this section shall not exceed two and one half feet in width and four feet in height. The sign itself shall be moveable, shall not be permanently attached in any way to the sidewalk, and shall not be chained or attached in any way to street furniture, other signs, street trees, other landscaping, or other fixtures or appurtenances on or in the sidewalk.
 - 3. Each sidewalk sign allowed under this section, shall be removed each day by the close of business, and shall be replaced or removed when the appearance or condition of the sign deteriorates.
- B. Within the CN, CG, and MU Districts, the additional requirements must also be met:

- 1.** The area shall consist of one or more contiguous blocks where at least 75% of the blockface contains buildings which abut the street sidewalk.
- 2.** At least 50% of the buildings shall have space at the street level which consists of retail stores, shops and restaurants.
- 3.** When the area is located in an historic district overlay, a plan in conformance with the requirements of Sec. 11.8, Elements of Common and Way-Finding Signage Plans, shall be reviewed by the HPC pursuant to Sec. 3.17, Certificate of Appropriateness.

Sec. 11.6 Signs Requiring Permits

11.6.1 Table of Signs Requiring Permits

Upon issuance of a sign permit in accordance with Sec. 3.10, Sign Permit, the following signs shall be allowed subject to the following requirements.

SIGNS REQUIRING PERMITS	
A. Awning Signs <p>A sign which is a part of a fabric or other non-structural awning.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Awning signs shall be permitted for nonresidential uses and in all nonresidential zoning districts subject to the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sign shall be flat against the surface of the awning. 2. The sign shall maintain a clearance of 7'-6" above a public right-of-way or required front yard. 3. The sign shall not be closer than two feet, measured in horizontal distance, from the curb line of any street. 4. The sign shall not extend more than five feet into the right-of-way unless a license agreement pursuant to paragraph 11.5.1, General, has been issued. 5. Any fabric awning valance may not extend more than one foot below the rigid mount of the awning. 6. The maximum sign area is 40 square feet per sign. 7. Only one sign is permitted over each door or window. 8. The area of all permitted awning signs shall be included in the area of all wall signs. 	
B. Canopy Signs <p>A sign on a permanent, decorative porch or walkway cover other than an awning which is attached to a building or supported by columns extending to the ground.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Canopy signs shall be permitted on nonresidential uses subject to the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The maximum sign area per canopy face is 12 square feet. 2. The vertical edge of the canopy sign shall be a maximum of two feet in height, except for fuel canopies, where the maximum vertical edge of the canopy may be 42 inches. 3. In no case shall the sign extend beyond the vertical edge of the canopy to which it is attached. 4. The sign area used for the computation of sign size shall be deducted from the allowable square footage for wall signs. 	

SIGNS REQUIRING PERMITS	
C. Freestanding Signs	
<p>There are two types of freestanding signs:</p> <p>1. Monument Signs</p> <p>A freestanding sign constructed on the ground with a continuous footing or foundation with the base of the sign at grade level.</p> <p>2. Pylon Signs</p> <p>A freestanding sign permanently affixed to the ground by one or more supports.</p> <p>3. Standards</p> <p>Standards for freestanding signs are pursuant to paragraph 11.6.2, Standards for Freestanding Signs.</p>	 <p>Monument Sign</p>  <p>Pylon Sign</p>
D. Marquee Signs	
<p>Signs/message areas on a permanent roof-like structure projecting over an entrance of a building (marquee).</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Marquee signs shall be allowed in all non-residential districts, including MU, UC, and DD Districts, subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The marquee shall maintain a vertical clearance over a sidewalk of at least 7'-6". 2. The marquee shall be no closer than two feet, measured in horizontal distance, from the curb line of any street. 3. The message area may extend the full length of the marquee. 4. The message area shall not exceed eight feet in height. 5. The message area shall not exceed 200 square feet in area, except in the DD District where it shall not exceed 350 square feet in area. 6. Only one marquee sign shall be allowed per establishment. 	

SIGNS REQUIRING PERMITS	
<p>E. Projecting Signs</p> <p>A sign forming an angle with a building which extends from the building and is supported by the building.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Projecting signs shall be allowed on all nonresidential uses, subject to the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sign shall not extend above the top of the wall to which it is attached, except that a sign 18 inches or less in width and perpendicular to such wall may extend up to a maximum of two feet beyond the top of the wall. 2. The sign shall maintain a clearance of 7'-6" above a public right-of-way or required front yard. 3. The sign shall not extend into a required front yard more than six feet or into a public right-of-way more than 4.5 feet unless a license agreement pursuant to paragraph 11.5.1, General, has been issued. 4. The sign shall not exceed 40 square feet in area. 5. Only one sign shall be permitted per establishment, except that an establishment in a Design District with more than one street frontage may have one sign per street frontage. 	
<p>F. Roof Signs</p> <p>A sign that is higher than the highest point of the roof to which it is attached. Signs that do not extend above the roof, but are attached to the lower slope of a roof or attached to a parapet wall above a flat roof are considered wall signs. Signs that do not extend above the highest point of the roof, even if attached to mansard or canopy roofs are considered wall signs.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Roof signs shall be allowed subject to the following regulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roof signs are allowed only in the MU District and Downtown Tier. 2. Roof signs shall be allowed by right on buildings of five stories or more. 3. Roof signs on buildings with less than five stories are allowed through the approval of a Design Special Use Permit, pursuant to Sec. 3.9, Special Use Permit. 4. The maximum sign area shall be 15% of the building facade area that is on the same building elevation as the sign. The amount of sign area devoted to roof signs shall be deducted from the allowable wall sign square footage. 	

SIGNS REQUIRING PERMITS	
<p>G. Suspended Signs</p> <p>A sign that is attached to the underside of a horizontal plane or arm and is supported by the horizontal plane.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Suspended signs shall be permitted in all zoning districts, subject to the following regulations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sign shall be no closer than two feet, measured in horizontal distance, from the curb line of any street. 2. The sign shall maintain a vertical clearance over a sidewalk of at least 7'-6". 3. The sign area shall not exceed 3½ square feet. 4. Only one sign shall be allowed per establishment or per exterior wall per establishment. 	
<p>H. Temporary Signs</p> <p>Any sign which is intended for temporary use and not permanently mounted. The sign shall relate to a special event or temporary situation, not a routine business activity.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p>Temporary signs shall be allowed in every district, subject to the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sign may be erected up to two weeks before the event and shall be removed within seven days after the event. However, in no case shall a sign be posted for more than 30 days. 2. The sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet except in the Design Districts, where the sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet or 10% of the square footage of the building facade area on one street frontage, whichever is larger. 3. Only one sign shall be allowed per business per special event and shall include the date(s) of the event in the sign copy. 4. Each business site may be issued two sign permits for a temporary sign within a 12-month period. Each 12-month period shall begin with the issuance of the first permit and shall expire 12 months from that date. 5. Construction information, or sales, rental, or leasing information, must meet the standards of paragraphs 11.4.2, 11.4.13, and 11.4.14 as applicable. 6. Exception for Downtown Design District: Signs on vacant buildings that drape the building facades or cover the windows, and that display only decorative graphics or public art, shall be allowed with no maximum square footage, number, or duration. Such signs shall be removed prior to occupancy. 	

SIGNS REQUIRING PERMITS	
<p>I. Wall Signs</p> <p>Any sign, other than a projecting sign, which is permanently attached to or painted on any wall of a building. A sign attached to the lower slope of a mansard or canopy roof, or a sign affixed to or forming an awning or a canopy, shall be considered a wall sign for purposes of this Ordinance. For purposes of this section only, a "wall" shall include any permanent architectural extension of a wall, including parapets, unless that extension serves solely as the framing for a sign support structure or sign face, even if such extension projects beyond or above the enclosed portions of the building. For signs that extend above the roof see "Roof Signs."</p> <p>Standards - Nonresidential Districts</p> <p>Wall signs shall be subject to the following requirements in nonresidential districts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sign shall not extend more than 12 inches from the wall of the building, except in the case of a sign on the lower slope of a roof or a canopy roof, where the sign may extend the distance required to make the sign vertical. 2. The sign may extend up to 12 inches into a public right-of-way. 3. The sign may not extend beyond the edges of the wall to which it is attached, except when the sign is contiguous on two adjacent walls of the same building, the connecting portion may extend to but not beyond the face of the adjoining portion. 4. The sign may not prevent the free entrance and exit from any window, door or fire escape. 5. Wall signs may not exceed 15% of the wall area in size. Where the area of the wall is less than 167 square feet, a minimum of 25 square feet of wall sign area is allowed. 6. The total sign area shall be the sum of all signs on the wall including signs on the wall surface, signs affixed to the wall parallel and in the same plane as the wall, signs on awnings or canopies, window signs, door signs, signs on the lower slopes of roofs or canopy roofs, and signs on parapets above roofs. 7. The sign shall only have one face, regardless of the proposed angle of separation of proposed faces. <p>Standards - Residential Districts</p> <p>Wall signs in residential districts shall be subject to the following requirements:</p> <p>Nonresidential uses permitted in residential districts and all multifamily developments shall be allowed one wall sign per building, provided the sign does not exceed 15% of the wall area; however, a minimum of 25 square feet of sign area shall be allowed.</p>	

11.6.2 Standards for Freestanding Signs

A. Design Districts, and Nonresidential Districts and Uses

Freestanding signs shall be permitted in Design Districts, nonresidential zoning districts, and for non-residential uses in residential zoning districts subject to the following requirements.

1. Height

a. Monument Sign

The distance from the ground to the highest point of the sign shall be not more than six feet.

b. Pylon Sign

The distance from the ground to the highest point of the sign shall not exceed 16 feet, except for nonresidential uses in residential districts or in the MTC Overlay (Sec. 4.9), where the sign height shall not exceed 12 feet.

c. Exemption

A pylon sign up to 40 feet in height for restaurants, hotels, motels, or fuel sales establishments is allowed when:

- (1) The property is within 400 feet of the right-of-way of a controlled access highway;
- (2) The property is either adjacent to, or within 150 feet of, an interchange providing access to the controlled access highway; and
- (3) The property is not located in a Design District or MTC Overlay.

2. Number

a. One freestanding sign shall be permitted on each street on which the property fronts.

b. Except within Design Districts, additional signs are allowed in a development with an approved common signage plan for a street frontage that exceeds 300 feet. If multiple signs are placed on a single street frontage, no individual sign shall exceed 80 square feet in area and there shall be a minimum of 150 feet between the signs.

3. Area

a. Sign Area in Nonresidential Districts

Individual signs on each street frontage of a property shall not exceed 32 square feet in area when the frontage is less than 150 feet, and shall not exceed 80 square feet in area when the frontage is 150 feet or more.

b. Sign Area of Nonresidential Uses in Residential Districts

- (1) For lots with a frontage of less than 150 linear feet, the sign shall not exceed 12 square feet in area.
- (2) For lots with a frontage of 150 linear feet or more, the sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area.

C. Sign Area in Design Districts

Freestanding signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area.

4. Location

- a. Freestanding signs shall not be placed within the MTC buffer area but may be placed within other landscaped areas.
- b. Freestanding signs shall not be located within any sight distance triangles.

5. Setback

- a. If the sign height is six feet or less, or within a Design District, there shall be no minimum setback required from the property line.
- b. If the sign height is over six feet:
 - (1) For sign areas of 32 square feet or less, a minimum setback of five feet from all property lines shall be required, except that a minimum setback of 12 feet from adjoining residential properties shall be required.
 - (2) For sign areas of more than 32 square feet, a minimum setback of 10 feet from all property lines shall be required, except that a minimum setback of 12 feet from adjoining residential properties shall be required.

6. Design Standards

- a. Except for signs located within Design districts, pylon sign supports shall consist of at least 30% of the total sign width; each single support shall consist of at least 15% of the total sign width.
- b. Within Design Districts, freestanding signs shall incorporate the following design standards:
 - (1) All freestanding signs shall have three-part design as follows:
 - (a) Monument signs shall be composed of a decorative base, sign face, and cap.
 - (b) Pylon signs shall be composed of a decorative base, support, and sign face.
 - (2) Signs and sign support material shall be constructed of metal, painted or stained non-pressure-treated wood, masonry, fabric, glass, ceramics, or concrete.
 - (3) Fasteners used for securing the sign to the ground shall be obscured by covers.
 - (4) Proportion

Pylon signs shall be proportionally taller than they are wide.

7. Landscaping

Except within Design Districts, freestanding signs shall incorporate the following landscaping requirements.

- a. A defined landscaped area shall be provided at the base of the sign. The required landscaped area shall be parallel to the face of the sign. The required landscaped area shall be at least 50 square feet in area. For signs with multiple faces, the landscaped area shall be allocated so that a portion of the required landscaping is located in front of each sign face.
- b. The required landscaped area shall contain materials such as, but not limited to, vegetative ground covers, perennials, shrubs, and ornamental trees covering at least 50% of the defined landscaped area at maturity. Paving and artificial plant materials shall not be included in fulfilling this requirement. A plan of the landscaped area with the name, quantity, and spacing of plant materials shall be included as a part of the sign permit application.

8. Medical Center Signs

Additional freestanding signs for medical facilities containing 250 beds or more shall be allowed subject to the following limitations. Unless explicitly altered below, all other applicable standards shall apply.

- a. The information contained on the sign shall relate to medical facility services.
- b. Each sign shall not exceed 12 feet in height and 50 square feet in area;
- c. The number of signs allowed shall not exceed a ratio of one sign per 150 feet of medical facility property street frontage measured on the street on which the signs are to be located; and
- d. All signs associated with the medical facility shall be approved as part of a common signage plan in conformance with the requirements of Sec. 11.8, Elements of Common and Way-Finding Signage Plans.

9. Way-Finding Signs

- a. Way-finding signs are allowed along a right-of-way internal to a unified development complex, as demonstrated through a development plan or approved site plan(s), even if the property is subdivided and has various owners.
- b. Signs shall function solely for the purpose of providing directional information along rights-of-way from recognized sub-sections, tenants, or areas of the development to other recognized sub-sections, tenants, or areas of the development. Referenced sub-sections, tenants, or areas can be located on different parcels other than the parcel where the sign is located.
- c. Unless explicitly altered below, all other applicable standards shall apply. Way-finding signs located internally within a property and not visible from right-of-way are exempt from the following standards.
 - (1) The information contained on the sign shall provide direction to the sub-sections, areas, or tenants within the development.
 - (2) Each sign, including supports, shall not exceed six feet in height.
 - (3) The maximum sign area per side shall be 16 square feet.
 - (4) Sign area shall not count towards the aggregate sign area allowed for the development, unless a specific tenant is listed on the sign.

- (5) Signs shall be located along right-of-way that is interior to the unified development, and not visible from outside of the unified development.
- (6) No setback is required. Signs and sign supports shall not intrude or be located within right-of-way.
- (7) The number of signs allowed shall not exceed a ratio of one sign per 500 linear feet of property street frontage measured along the right-of-way on which the signs are to be located.
- (8) All way-finding signs shall be approved as part of a way-finding signage plan in conformance with the requirements of paragraph 11.8.2, Elements of a Way-Finding Signage Plan.
- (9) Changeable copy is prohibited.

10. Off-Premise Non-Residential Entry Signs

An off-premise, freestanding non-residential sign is allowed as an entry sign for a unified development complex, as demonstrated through a development plan or approved site plan(s), even if the property is subdivided and has various owners. Unless explicitly altered below, all other applicable standards shall apply.

- a. Signs shall be located on a property that is part of the development, or on a parcel adjacent to the development tract that is zoned non-residential or multifamily, and does not already maintain a freestanding sign within 300 feet of the proposed sign.
- b. A sign shall be allowed only at each entry to the development, and only along public right-of-way that serves as internal access to the development.
- c. The sign shall not be located or encroach within public right-of-way.
- d. A sign pursuant to paragraph 11.5.1E is not permitted at the same entry.
- e. Signs shall be included within the common signage plan for the development, as applicable.
- f. The signs may only include the development name and tenants of the development.
- g. The sign may list tenants of the development that are not on the same parcel as the sign.
- h. Tenant signage shall count towards the aggregate sign area per paragraph 11.2.2A.4 and paragraph 11.2.2B, Aggregate Sign Area.
- i. A tenant listed on the non-residential entry sign shall not maintain a separate, individual freestanding sign if the entry sign is located on the same parcel as the tenant, or if the individual tenant sign is located within 150 feet of the entry sign.
- j. A sign easement shall be recorded for the location(s) of entry signs prior to the issuance of a sign permit.
- k. Changeable copy is prohibited.

B. Residential Identification Signs**1. Residential Subdivisions**

Up to two freestanding signs may be placed at each entrance to identify the subdivision. Each sign shall be limited to six feet in height and 12 square feet in area. Signs shall be incorporated into a permanent landscape feature such as a wall or masonry column.

2. PDR Districts and Multifamily Developments

Up to two freestanding signs may be placed at each entrance to identify the project. Each sign shall be limited to six feet in height and the total sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet in area for a single sign and 16 square feet each if two signs are used. The sign shall be incorporated into a permanent landscape feature such as a wall or masonry column.

Sec. 11.7 Landmark Signs

11.7.1 Privileges

Signs which have been officially designated as Landmark Signs pursuant to Sec. 3.16, Historic District or Landmark Designation, and which retain those dimensional, locational, and lighting standards that the sign possessed when it received such a designation shall enjoy the following privileges.

- A. Shall be allowed to remain on roofs or exceed height limits found elsewhere in this Article.
- B. Shall be allowed to exceed dimensional limits found elsewhere in this Article.
- C. Shall be allowed to reference a product or business which is not related to the existing business on the property.
- D. Shall not, if the sign is not related to an existing business, have the sign area deducted from the square footage of sign area granted by other standards of this Article.
- E. Shall be allowed to remain in a right-of-way unless it becomes a hazard to traffic.
- F. Shall be allowed to retain its original lighting patterns and materials.

11.7.2 Regulations

The following regulations shall apply to signs which have been designated as Landmark Signs.

- A. The voluntary removal of a Landmark Sign by an owner shall be allowed.
- B. Alterations to a Landmark Sign shall not be allowed without the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Historic Preservation Commission using the criteria used in Sec. 3.17, Certificate of Appropriateness.

Sec. 11.8 Elements of Common and Way-Finding Signage Plans

11.8.1 Elements of a Common Signage Plan

The common signage plan shall consist of five elements:

A. Location

Identification of sign locations on buildings or property.

B. Materials and Illumination

Description of the type of sign and sign materials, including construction materials and proposed lighting if any.

C. Size

1. Itemization of sign size or band area at identified locations.
2. Allocation of sign area for multi-tenant structures may favor one tenant or series of tenants over another, provided the property owner identifies the available sign area per tenant.

D. Letter Style

1. Description of dominant letter style and letter height to be used on the signs.
2. The Planning Director, or designee, may allow deviations to the lettering style of proposed or existing common signage plans to accommodate state and federally registered trademarks (logos) if the Planning Director, or designee, determines that the intent of the common signage plan requirements will be maintained. In allowing deviations, the Planning Director, or designee, may limit the logo size.

E. Color

1. Listing of the colors to be used on each sign.
2. A maximum of three colors plus either black or white are allowed in a single common plan. Any neon lighting for building signage shall be matched to an approved color specified on the signage plan in order to be included as a part of the color scheme.

11.8.2 Elements of a Way-Finding Signage Plan

A. Location

All proposed locations along right-of-way within the development shall be identified.

B. Sign and Type

Sign sizes and types to be used shall be identified.

C. Font, Symbols, and Color

Fonts, symbols, and colors to be used shall be identified and meet the following criteria:

1. A maximum of two fonts can be used; one for the overall development name and one for the names of sub-sections or tenants of the development.
2. A maximum of two font sizes can be used; one for the overall development name and one for the sub-sections or tenants of the development.
3. If a unified development has both a common signage plan and a way-finding signage plan, the same fonts shall be used in both plans.
4. The following logos or symbols are permitted:
 - a. Logo associated with the name of the unified development.
 - b. Directional arrows.
5. A maximum of three colors plus either black or white are allowed. If a unified development has both a common signage plan and a way-finding signage plan, the same colors shall be used within both plans.

D. Lighting and Materials

The lighting and materials to be used shall be indicated.

11.8.3 Approval Procedure

The approval procedure for common and way-finding signage plans is set forth in Sec. 3.11, Common and Way-Finding Signage Plans.